



Community Engagement Policy

Reference Number:	4.3
Type:	Council
Category:	Safety and Community
Relevant Community Vision Outcome:	<u>Connecting and Belonging</u> • Our communities have a voice and feel respected and valued. • We create opportunities for communities to collaborate, engage and connect. • We support and value diversity.
Responsible Officer:	Community Engagement Coordinator
First Issued/Approved:	March 2000
Minutes Reference:	CL 24/08/26, Item 6.3
Last Reviewed:	August 2026
Next Review Due:	August 2028
Applicable Legislation:	Local Government Act 1999, s50, s50A
Related Policies:	Community Engagement Charter

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to articulate the steps that Council intends to take under the Local Government Act 1999 (**the Act**) and the Community Engagement Charter (**the Charter**) in relation to community engagement. This Policy only applies to matters relating to the Act.

Under Chapter 2 of the Act a council establishes the governance and management framework and responsibilities for its area. Section 8 of the Act establishes Principles to be observed by a council in the performance of its roles and function and these pertain to a councils engagement with the community. These include but are not limited to:

- provide open, responsive and accountable government;
- be responsive to the needs, interests and aspirations of individuals and groups within its community;
- seek to facilitate sustainable development and the protection of the environment and to ensure a proper balance within its community between economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations; and
- seek to provide services, facilities and programs that are adequate and appropriate and seek to ensure equitable access to its services, facilities and programs.

Section 50A of the Act requires Council to prepare and adopt a policy relating to community engagement for the purposes of the Act. The policy must be consistent with and comply with any requirements specified by the Charter.

This Policy will guide Council in the planning, delivery and evaluation of community engagement prior to making decisions under the Act, consistently with Council's obligation under the Act.

The Council recognises that consultation can bring forward diverse views in relation to a particular matter or proposal. Council will consider relevant factors, including legislative requirements, budget constraints, strategic directions, public safety, expert advice and community views. Council will weigh and balance competing social, economic, technical, environmental and cultural considerations where necessary, as part of its decision-making process. Consultation is not a vote or poll. The final decision in matters will rest with the Council.

2. Policy Objective

The purpose of this policy is to support Council in meeting its legislative obligations and community expectations regarding community engagement by:

- Meeting the requirements set out in the Act and the Charter.
- Using appropriate and cost-effective engagement methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each decision, activity or process.
- Providing for appropriate participation opportunities for the relevant: local community, key stakeholders and interested parties.
- Using feedback to inform decision making.
- Providing information on the reasons for decision or actions of Council, where reasonable and appropriate.

This policy is a statement of Council's general position in relation to community engagement as required under the Act and the Charter.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to Council, staff, contractors, and agents or consultants with authority to act on behalf of Council in the delivery of community engagement activities for the Council.

This policy applies to decisions, activities and processes undertaken by the Council, a delegate of the Council or a person exercising power on the Council's behalf, where community engagement is required to be undertaken in accordance with the Act, the Charter, or this policy. A reference in this policy to 'Council' includes a reference to a delegate or other person exercising power on the Council's behalf.

4. Responsibilities

Council is the elected body charged with responsibility for making decisions under the Act on behalf of the community. Under specific circumstances Council may delegate decision making to Council officers; or Council may override a delegation and call a matter to come before Council as and when it sees fit.

The Mayor and Councillors' roles within the community engagement process may include promoting and attending community engagement opportunities, and listening to and observing community views.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for causing the implementation and application of this Policy, and where necessary, reporting the outcomes of consultations to the Council. The specific delegations made under this Policy are outlined in Part 9 of this Policy.

General Managers and Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff undertake their duties in a way that is consistent with this Policy.

Managers and staff that have Community Engagement Responsibilities are to provide advice and assistance and keep the Policy visible and readily accessible.

This policy does not apply where the Council is exercising powers and functions under any other Act. Where there are consultation requirements under other legislation, e.g. the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, those specific processes take precedence over this policy.

5. Charter Principles

The following principles in the Charter have been considered in the preparation of this policy:

- Community members should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities, processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes;
- Information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;
- Participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of council;
- Participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes; and
- Insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.

Council may, in its absolute discretion, determine to undertake a step or steps in addition to those set out in this policy in relation to a matter for which it is required by the Act and/or Charter to undertake community engagement.

However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any additional step or steps in relation to such a matter. A well-intentioned engagement that does not generate the anticipated level of engagement is not a breach of this policy.

Council may, from time to time, alter or substitute a new policy, following community engagement.

6. Community Engagement Categories

The Charter addresses minimum mandatory community engagement activities for matters where the Act requires consultation to be undertaken.

The Charter establishes different categories of consultation matters, as follows:

Significant – Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy

- Adopting an Annual Business Plan - section 123(3)(b)
- Changes to basis of rating, declaring differential rates, imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge, or changing the basis on which land is valued for the purpose of rating - section 151(5)(e)

Significant

- Representation reviews - section 12(7)
- Development and review of Strategic Management Plans - section 122(6)
- Changes to use of differential rating - section 156(4a)(b)
- Revocation of classification of land as community land - section 194(2)(b)
- Community Land Management Plans - adoption - section 197(1)
- Community Land Management Plans – significant amendments - section 198(3)
- Alienation of community land by lease or license - section 202(2)

Standard

- Opening hours and place of principal office - substantial changes - section 45(3)
- Community Engagement Policy - section 50A(6)(b)
- Council behavioural support policies - section 75F(6)
- Access to meetings and documents - section 92(5)
- Power to make orders - section 259(2)(b)

Local

- Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available - section 223(1)
- Proposed planting of vegetation on a road – significant impact - section 232(b)

Inform

- Opening hours and place of principal office – minor changes - section 45(3)
- Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for less than 48 hours and the Council ensures that a detour is in place - section 223(1)
- Election information - section 13A (2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*

The table in Part 7 of this policy sets out the mandatory minimum actions to achieve the Charter requirements and provides examples of engagement activities that Council may consider undertaking to meet the requirements of each matter for which community engagement must be undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Charter.

7. Charter Engagement Requirements

The following table sets out the mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirements and provides indicative examples of engagement activities that Council may consider undertaking.

There is no obligation on Council to utilise any of these indicative engagement activity examples or utilise multiple engagement activities in respect of each Charter requirement. Council will choose engagement activities on a case-by-case basis.

The Community Engagement Approach template attached at Appendix 1 may be used to plan for engagement activities under Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category					Engagement activity (indicative examples)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Website	Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a Council website.	X	X	X	X	X	Your Say Charles Sturt website
News publication	Publish information about the matter in a local news publication (print where available, but otherwise digital) that circulates in the Council area and is not produced by the Council.	X	X				Public notice in The Advertiser
Consult with the whole council area	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the Council area. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.	X	X	X			- Your Say Charles Sturt website - Information at Council offices, Council libraries, and/or Council community centres - Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council
Invite submissions	Provide information about how the community can make a submission, including timeframe. Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days to enable the community to provide feedback.	X	X				Your Say Charles Sturt website
Explain decision making process	In material prepared explain what the Council proposes to do, why it proposes to do it, and what it seeks to achieve. Explain how community feedback will inform the Council's decision.	X	X				Your Say Charles Sturt website
Seek and consider feedback from the community—significant matters	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community. Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days to enable the community to provide feedback. Include a summary of community engagement feedback to the Council ahead of the decision.	X	X				- Your Say Charles Sturt website - Survey - Written submission (email or letter) - Verbal submission - Attendance in person at a community drop-in or workshop
Public meeting	Hold a public meeting where the community is invited to provide submissions (written or verbal) on the matter. The public meeting may be part of a Council meeting or a separate event.	X					Verbal submission

Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category					Engagement activity (indicative examples)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Council meeting invitation	Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a Council meeting to speak to their submission before the decision is made.		X				
Seek and consider feedback from the community	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community. Provide information about how community feedback will inform the Council's decision. Ensure an appropriate period of time is provided to enable communities to provide feedback.			X	X		• Your Say Charles Sturt website • Survey • Written submission (email or letter) • Verbal submission • Attendance in person at a community drop-in or workshop
Consult with local community	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the area within the council affected by the Council decision or action. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the local community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.				X		• Your Say Charles Sturt website • Information at Council offices, nearby Council library, and/or community centre • Targeted letterbox drop and/or mailout to local community • Temporary sign in the local neighbourhood • Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council
Information to the whole council area	Provide information to the whole of the Council's community if it may be directly affected by the council decision or action.					X	• Your Say Charles Sturt website • Information at Council offices, Council libraries, and/or Council community centres • Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council
Information to local community	Provide information to the local community that may be directly affected by the Council decision or action.					X	• Your Say Charles Sturt website • Information at Council offices, nearby Council library, and/or community centre • Targeted letterbox drop and/or mailout to local community • Temporary sign in the local neighbourhood • Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council

8. Other Decisions, Activities and Processes

There may be decisions, activities and processes where the Act and Charter are silent in relation to community engagement, but for which the Council may consider that community engagement may be appropriate.

As such, Council; the CEO; or a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; may determine to undertake community engagement activities at its absolute discretion. However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any such steps in relation to these matters. For example, discretionary consultation may be appropriate for a project or matter which, in the opinion of the Council; the CEO; or delegate:

- involves significant expenditure on large scale capital works;
- is of economic, social, environmental or cultural importance;
- is, or is likely to be, of significant community interest; and
- is likely to be enhanced through engagement with the community.

Where it has been determined to undertake discretionary consultation the Council; the CEO; or a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; may have regard to:

- Guidance materials for public consultation, such as the Local Government Association of South Australia Community Engagement Framework, and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) resources; and/or
- Community Engagement Approach template attached at Appendix 1.

9. Delegation

Specific engagement activities to be undertaken in relation to any particular decision, activity or processes shall be determined on a case by case basis, by:

- Council, by resolution; or
- the CEO, or
- a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy.

Council, the CEO; or delegate, is not required by this policy to undertake, or to consider or determine whether to undertake, additional engagement activities.

10. Review and Evaluation

To ensure Council continues to meet legislative requirements and undertakes effective community engagement, this policy will be subject to periodic evaluation and review, typically on a two-year cycle.

11. Further Information

A copy of this policy can be obtained from the Council's Civic Centre listed below during ordinary business hours on request for a fixed fee (if applicable). It may also be downloaded from Council's website: www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au

City of Charles Sturt
 72 Woodville Road
 WOODVILLE SA 5011
 T: (08) 8408 1111
 E: council@charlessturt.sa.gov.au

12. Definitions

Key Term – Acronym	Definition
Charter	The Community Engagement Charter published in the South Australian Government Gazette on 11 December 2025.
Communication	The imparting or exchange of information between the Council and the community to produce greater understanding.
Community	A general term for the people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of the City of Charles Sturt. The community are often referred to as “stakeholders” in the affairs of Council. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of interest), or a community of affiliation or identity (such as an industry or sporting club).
Community Engagement	A generic term to describe the broad range of interactions between Council and the community. Engagement can include a variety of approaches, such as communication, and consultation. In the context of this policy, the term “community engagement” is synonymous with the terms “public consultation” or “community consultation”.
Community Engagement Approach	A document that articulates the community engagement approach and process for specific matters, sometimes also referred to as a CEA.
Council	Means the elected member body representing the City of Charles Sturt community (and includes the CEO or a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy)
CEO	Refers to the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Charles Sturt and includes a person acting in the office of the chief executive officer.
General Manager	Refers to a General Manager of the City of Charles Sturt and includes a person acting in the role of a General Manager.
Policy	Refers to this Community Engagement Policy..
Public	Refer to the definition for “Community”.
Public Consultation	Public consultation involves providing information and opportunities for community input to inform the decision maker. Public consultation is important in the successful development of acceptable policies and decisions in government, the private sector and the community. In the context of this policy, the term “community engagement” is synonymous with the terms “public consultation” or “community consultation”.
Stakeholder	An individual, group of individuals or agency/organisation that has an interest in a decision or proposal or may be directly or indirectly affected by a decision that has been made or is being proposed.
The Act	Means the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> , as amended from time to time.

13. Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – Community Engagement Approach Template

APPENDIX 1

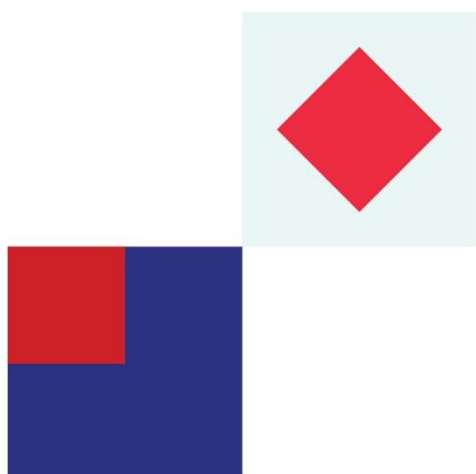
Community Engagement Approach Template



TEMPLATE

Template Only – this template may be used to plan for engagement activities under Council's Community Engagement Policy

Community Engagement Approach for (Project Name) Month/Year



Contact: [Officer name]
[Position]
[Business Unit/Portfolio]
[PH: 08 8408 1111]
[Email]

Community Engagement Approach for [Project Name]

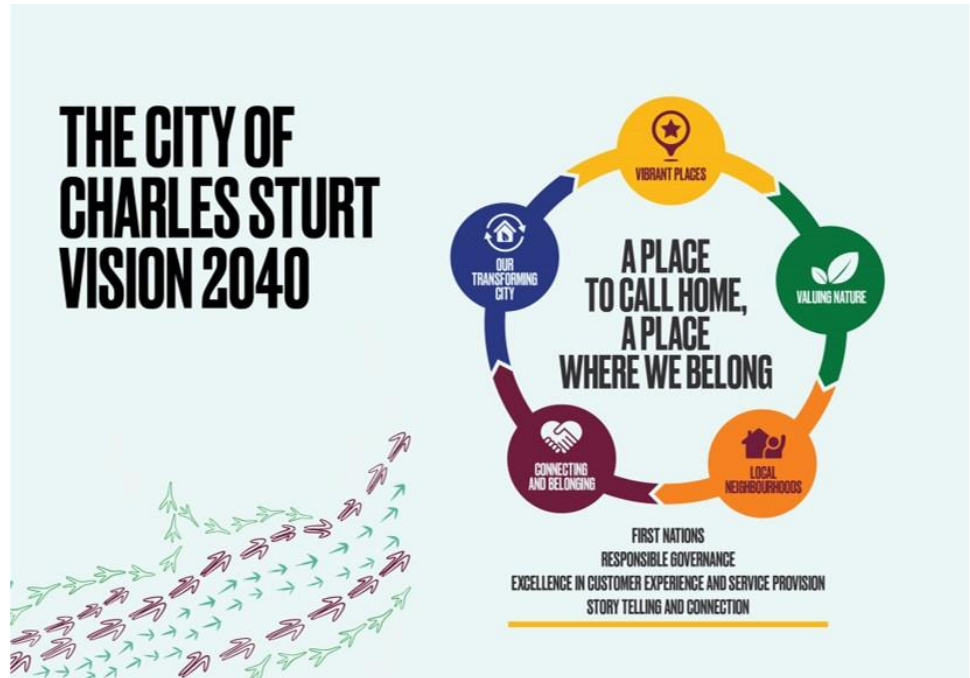
1. Purpose and Objectives

State the purpose and objectives of the Community Engagement Approach, which is to outline the proposed community engagement approach in relation to a specific project (matter) having regard to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1999, Community Engagement Charter, and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Project Alignment

State the Community Vision themes that align with the project, these may include:

- Vibrant Places
- Valuing Nature
- Local Neighbourhoods
- Connecting and Belonging
- Our Transforming City
- First Nations
- Responsible Governance
- Excellence in Customer Experience and Service Provision
- Story Telling and Connection



2. Project Background

Set the context and background to the project and community engagement.

3. Consultation Scope

Outline the scope of the consultation including aspects of the project that are negotiable and non-negotiable. Present a clear understanding of the aspects the community may be able to influence. Examples of non-negotiables might relate to State Government funding parameters, need to comply with legislation or a pre-determined timeframe. There will be times when available timelines, legislation, policy or budget may dictate the consultation steps and activities selected. Items will be brought to council in a timely manner to allow for comprehensive consultation opportunities with our community.

4. Communities of Interest

Identify the stakeholders and broader communities of interest for the project. A stakeholder may be an individual, group of individuals or agency/organisation that has an interest in a decision or proposal, or may be directly or indirectly affected by a decision or proposal.

Council's community includes people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of Council.

A community of interest may be a geographic locality (City-wide or localised community of place); a community of similar interest (community of interest); or a community of affiliation, practice or identity (such as industry group, sporting club, resident action group, cultural group or language-based group) who may be interested in or affected by a project.

Consider diversity and inclusion needs, and seek out the interests of 'hard to reach' sectors in our community who experience barriers to participation or remain unheard on a project or issue that may affect them. Examples include young people, elderly and vulnerable residents, socially-disadvantaged, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, and non-English speaking residents.

5. Planning Community Engagement and Timeframe

Public Consultation Category

Select the category of consultation having regard to the Charter and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

- Significant – Annual business plan and rating policy; or
- Significant; or
- Standard; or
- Local; or
- Inform; or
- Discretionary – Decisions, activities and processes not specified in the Charter where it has been determined (by Council; the CEO; or a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or Council's Community Engagement Policy) to undertake discretionary consultation.

Charter Engagement Requirements

State any mandatory minimum actions having regard to the Charter and Council's Community Engagement Policy, refer to the table in Part 7 of Council's Community Engagement Policy.

- e.g. website – publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a Council website.

Additional Engagement Activities

Outline any additional engagement activities that will be undertaken for the matter.

- e.g. community drop-in activity or temporary sign in the local area.

Additional engagement activities will be planned and tailored to best suit the project having regard to guidance materials for community engagement, such as the Local Government Association of South Australia Community Engagement Framework and Engagement Institute resources. Activities selected will vary from project to project according to:

- Project context and background (project history, previous community engagement, and project goal).
- Community context within which the project sits (social and political context, level of community interest).
- Project parameters (project scale, legislative requirements, consultation scope, budget, timeline and resources available).

The communication and community engagement activities listed below, whilst not intended to be all-encompassing, provide a wide variety of activities for consideration when Council's Managers and staff design and tailor the engagement activities for a specific project.

Not all activities are valid for all projects and the most appropriate activities should be selected having regard to the project, consultation scope and communities of interest. Some activities are useful when the purpose of a project is

to generate new ideas; others are useful when presenting and comparing options; some are useful when consulting with a defined geographic area; and others work well when trying to consult 'hard to reach' sectors in our community.

Examples of Communication and Community Engagement Activities

Communication Activities	Community Engagement Activities
Websites and Online Portals • Your Say Charles Sturt website • City of Charles Sturt website • Charles Sturt Customer Portal Social Media and Videos • Council social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and Instagram) • Council videos • Media screens in our libraries, community centres, and Civic Centre Internal Street Newsletters, Emails and Messaging • Emails • Short Message Service (SMS) • Council e-Newsletter • Western Business Leaders e-Newsletter • Council's Kaleidoscope Magazine Traditional Media and Advertising • Public notices • Newspaper ads • Bus stop ads • Radio Signage • Temporary signs • Banners Printed Information and Displays • Postcards • Flyers • Letters • Rates notice inserts • Posters and plans • Information displays in our libraries, community centres, and Civic Centre Internal Street • Information booths at events • Letterbox drops • Mailouts	Websites and Online Engagement • Your Say Charles Sturt website • Online engagement tools: ○ Form (survey, feedback, submission form) ○ Visioner ○ Gather ○ Social Map ○ Fund It ○ Question and Answer ○ Conversation ○ Forum ○ Quick Poll Written Engagement • Surveys - hardcopy • Written submissions In-person Interaction • Community pop-ups and drop-ins • Workshops • Focus groups • Interviews • Surveys – face to face or telephone • Existing community group involvement • Stalls at markets and events • Street-corner meetings • Site visits and walkshops • Shop front or project office in project area • World cafés • Graffiti walls • Enquiry by Design processes • Design Charrette processes • Advisory groups • Public meetings • Council deputations • Direct telephone and email contact details

Engagement Process and Timing

Provide an outline of the timeframe for planning, delivering and reporting on the community engagement for the project. The time required to successfully plan, implement and report on an engagement project is generally proportionate with project complexity. Some consultation activities will require a greater time commitment from staff to deliver them successfully. The consultation approach needs to fit within the overall timeframe associated with the project.

Step	Title	Description	Timeframe
1.	Prepare Approach	Prepare a community engagement approach in relation to the matter.	Insert month/year
2.	Authorise Approach	Obtain authorisation of the community engagement approach.	Insert month/year
3.	Undertake Community Engagement	The engagement activities include: - List Charter engagement requirements - List additional engagement activities	Insert month/year
4.	Consider Community Contributions	Consider all community contributions received, including written submissions.	Insert month/year
5.	Prepare Report	Prepare a report for Council which: - Summarises the community engagement process and outcomes; - Presents information in the broader context of the matter; and - Makes recommendations for Council to consider when deciding on the matter.	Insert month/year
6.	Council Decision	Council members will consider the report and recommendation(s) and decide on the matter. The right of a member of the community to address Council by way of deputation in support of any written submission may be granted at the discretion of the Mayor.	Insert month/year
7.	Communicate Decision	Following the decision making process, communicate the decision.	Insert month/year

6. Budget

Confirm that sufficient budget resources are available from the recurrent or capital budget to plan, deliver and report on the community engagement for this project. Resources may include administration costs, public advertisement costs, printing costs, banner or corflute sign production and installation costs, venue hire, event running costs, consultant services, and the like. Consultation will generally increase in line with project complexity and associated costs need to have regard to budget constraints associated with the project.

7. Reporting on Community Engagement

Outline how the community engagement process and feedback will be captured; analysed, summarised, and reported on. Following the decision-making process, community will be informed and the feedback loop closed.

8. Risk Management

Consider risks associated with the community engagement and plan to minimise and mitigate the impacts. Potential risks include:

- Balancing individual views with broader community views.
- Community satisfaction.
- Failing to understand community sentiments on a project.
- Impacts associated with project delays.
- Media interest.
- Reputational risks.

9. Approval of the Community Engagement Approach

Seek approval for the community engagement approach from the Council; the CEO; or delegate.